between 5 & 6

Dr. *SNAPE*'s THANKSGIVING SERMON

Preach'd before the

House of Commons,

ON

Wednesday, the 29th of *May*, 1717.

Jovis 30. die Maii, 1717.

ORdered, *That the Thanks of this Houſe be given to* Dr. Snape, *for the Sermon by him preach'd before this Houſe yeſterday at* S. Margaret's Weſtminſter; *and that he be deſir'd to print the ſame; and that* Sir William Wyndham, *and* Mr. Shippen, *do acquaint him therewith.*

PAUL JODRELL, *Cl' Dom' Com'*

695. 9. 6.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the Honourable

Houſe of Commons,

AT

S. MARGARET's, *Weſtminſter*,

ON

Wedneſday the 29th of *May*, 1717.

BEING

The Day of Publick Thankſgiving to Almighty GOD, for having put an End to the Great Rebellion, by the Reſtitution of King CHARLES II. and *Royal-Family*, and the *Reſtoration* of the Government.

By *ANDREW SNAPE*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

The Third EDITION.

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PSAL. lxxvi. 10.

Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee; the Remainder of Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.

THIS Pſalm is a grateful Commemoration of ſome great and ſignal Deliverance, which the *Jews* had obtained from their Enemies; and moſt probably was compos'd on Occaſion of the miraculous Defeat of *Sennacherib*, King of *Aſſyria*, who had inveſted *Jeruſalem* with a formidable Hoſt, and put the Inhabitants into the utmoſt Conſternation. Diſpirited by the Number, and aw'd by the inſulting Threats of their Beſiegers, they began to deſpair of all Succour or Relief, and thought of nothing elſe but Fire and Sword, Ravage and Deſolation, and all the fatal Extremities that could be expected from mercileſs and inhuman Conquerors.

In the midſt of this diſtreſſed State, it pleas'd the good Providence of God to ſend them an unexpected Reſcue: The numerous Army that ſurrounded their Walls, being intimidated by an

inviſible Power, ſlaughter'd by an inviſible Hand, and the powerful Invader himſelf ſoon after ſlain by the Hands of his two Sons in the Temple of his Idol.

In Memory, I ſay, of ſome ſuch Deliverance, and, as learned Interpreters ſuppoſe, of the Deliverance I have mention'd, was this Pſalm compos'd by *Aſaph*: Which, as it all along extolls the irreſiſtible Power of God, and the certain Victory of thoſe, on whoſe ſide he engages; ſo eſpecially this Verſe of my Text ſets forth the Folly and Madneſs of contending with God, or ſuch whoſe Cauſe he is pleaſed to eſpouſe; ſince the fierceſt Oppoſition that can be made, will redound, in the End, to his Glory: Nor can it laſt any longer, or prevail any farther, than he himſelf thinks fit to permit it. *Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee; the Remainder of Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.*

By *Wrath*, we are here to underſtand rebellious Rage, or tyrannical Fury, an outrageous hoſtile Bent of Mind, and Thirſt after Miſchief. By God's *reſtraining* that Wrath, I conceive to be meant, his interpoſing in due time, cutting ſhort the Deſigns of ſuch wrathful Men, before they have completed the intended Meaſure of their Iniquity. And by the *Remainder* of that Wrath, ſo much of their miſchievous Contrivance, as is ſtill unaccompliſh'd, and which the over-ruling Power of God prevents the Execution of. Whereas the former Part of the Verſe, *Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee*, ſeems rather to referr to ſuch of the Devices of wicke

wicked Men, as had ſucceeded in the Fact, tho' they were diſappointed in the End propos'd, which, contrary to their Expectation, was converted to the Glory of God, and to their own Shame and Confuſion.

This then we may take to be the Importance of the whole Verſe. 'Altho' for a while thou ſuf-'fereſt the Sons of Violence to proſper, to inſult 'thine Inheritance, to oppreſs thine Elect, and 'to lay Waſte thy Dwelling-Place; yet ſo far is 'this ſeeming Prevalence of theirs from diminiſh-'ing thy Honour, that it only helps to magnify 'and exalt it: Theſe are the Inſtruments of thy 'Vengeance, the Scourges wherewith thou cor-'rect'ſt thy beloved Children; theſe Men do but 'execute thy Decrees, whilſt they are perſecuting 'thy Saints, and whilſt they think they reſiſt thy 'Will, are then actually fulfilling it. But this once 'perform'd, if they have any Dregs of Fury left, 'any Vengeance of their own to wreak, after 'thine is ſatisfied; thou then interpoſeſt with a 'high Hand, and ſtretch'd-out Arm to baffle 'their Devices, and confound their Malice, and 'anſwereſt them, as thou didſt the haughty *Sen-'nacherib: Becauſe thy Rage againſt me, and thy 'Tumult is come up into mine Ears; therefore 'will I put my Hook in thy Noſe, and my Bridle 'in thy Lips, and I will turn thee back by the 'Way by which thou cameſt*, Iſa. xxxvii. 29.

This is the moſt natural and receiv'd Interpretation of the Paſſage now before us. It would take up too much of my Diſcourſe to ſhew the Reaſons for preferring this to other

Explications that have been given of the ſame Text, occaſion'd by the Latitude of ſome Phraſes in the Original; and I think it the leſs neceſſary, becauſe the Doctrine I ſhall urge will follow from the Words taken under any of thoſe Meanings.

Now, the Things I would inferr from this Obſervation of the Pſalmiſt, are theſe.

I. That Almighty God, for wiſe and good Reaſons, does for ſome time bear with the Inſtruments of Evil, and ſuffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and ſurprizing Height of Impiety. But,

II. That there is a determinate Degree of Wickedneſs, beyond which the Divine Providence will not ſuffer them to paſs, but manifeſtly interpoſes to prevent the fatal Conſequences that would follow from an unreſtrain'd, unlimited Power, join'd with a malicious Will, and brutal Diſpoſition to Miſchief. After which I ſhall proceed,

III. To conſider that particular Act of Providence, in the middle of the laſt Century, which we are now met to commemorate; when, tho' the Wrath of Man had prevailed to an exceſſive high Degree, ſo as to murder the Beſt of Kings, and overturn the Beſt of Conſtitutions; it yet pleas'd

pleas'd God to reſtrain the Remainder of that Wrath, by the Reſtoration of the Royal Family, and ſettling us again on our Ancient Foundations.

Firſt, That Almighty God, for Wiſe and Good Reaſons, does for ſome time bear with the Inſtruments of Evil, and ſuffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and ſurprizing Height of Impiety.

As to the Fact itſelf, that this Caſe does frequently happen; that there are daily Inſtances of dejected Innocence, and triumphant Villany; that the great Oppreſſors of Mankind do often flouriſh in Pomp and Splendor; that they enoy, or ſeem to enjoy, an Abundance of all outward Comforts, and fatten on the Spoils of the Injur'd and Oppreſs'd; that this, I ſay, is a Caſe of daily Occurrence, as well the Teſtimony of Holy Scripture, as the Univerſal Experience of Mankind, and the Complaints on this very Subject as Univerſal, make it needleſs for me to prove.

But it ſeems a Thing of more Conſequence, and far greater Difficulty, to reconcile theſe Things with the Juſtice and Holineſs of God, and to account for the Equity of ſuch Diſpenſations, than to prove that ſuch there are. But this Objection, however plauſible and popular, is founded on ſuch apparent Miſtakes, that nothing but a latent Infidelity, and a ſecret Diſtruſt of a Future State, where an equal Retribution ſhall be made for all that we have done and ſuf-

fer'd

fer'd here, could induce Men to inſiſt on it, or to urge it as a Defect of Providence.

One great Miſtake in this Objection is, that it ſuppoſes the Miſeries of this Life to be the proper Puniſhment of Vice, and the Pleaſures or Honours of it, the Reward of Vertue. Whereas, theſe are not the Benefits we contract for, nor the Wages for which we ſerve. A Crown of Glory and Immortality will be the undoubted Portion of ſuch as have Patience to expect it, and who approve themſelves God's faithful Servants: As for Temporal Proſperity, ſo much of it as is conducive to that End, or at leaſt not inconſiſtent with it, may be added to our Portion, by the bountiful Grace and Favour of our Supreme Lord: But ſuch Kinds or Degrees of it, as that great Searcher of Hearts foreſees would prove a Snare to us, and be the Means of beguiling us of a better Inheritance, he moſt indulgently denies us, and 'tis our great Privilege to be without them.

Nor are good Men promis'd an Exemption from worldly Croſſes and Misfortunes: Their Religion and Goodneſs will indeed protect them from ſome Evils, but will expoſe them to others, which Suffering for Righteouſneſs Sake, however grievous in itſelf, may be made light and eaſy by this Conſideration, that it gives them a ſure Title to a proportionable Degree of Bleſſedneſs hereafter. And in the mean time, a firm Reliance on that Bleſſing in Reverſion, founded on the Teſtimony of a good Conſci-

ence;

ence; the repeated Experience of their own Stedfaſtneſs under the greateſt Preſſures, by the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace; the habitual Readineſs they have acquir'd of withſtanding all the Temptations that can be offer'd either by ſoothing Flattery, or terrifying Force; the Command of their Paſſions, and Conqueſt of their ghoſtly Enemies, are ſuch a comfortable Support to the Mind under the ſevereſt of worldly Evils, that even then, when they ſeem moſt afflicted and diſtreſs'd, they are full of inward Joy, and inexpreſſible Satisfaction.

Again, we have very wrong Notions of the Attributes of God, if we imagine that either his Holineſs or his Juſtice ſuffer the leaſt Diminution by thoſe promiſcuous Events, that befall the Righteous and the Wicked. As to the former, what greater Argument can be given of it, than that he has ſo ſtrictly forbidden whatſoever is contrary to it, and ſo ſolemnly declar'd, that without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord?

'Tis true, he could, if he had pleas'd, have prevented the Evil he forbids, and have enforc'd his verbal Prohibitions by actual Reſtraints. He could have tyed us up from Vice by the Chains of invincible Neceſſity, and have dragg'd us to Heaven by the Cords of a blind Fatality. But how then ſhould he have ſerv'd the great End of his Providence, which was to beſtow a Heavenly Kingdom on thoſe, who by a conſtant Perſeverance in Vertue, ſhould render themſelves (thro' the Mercies of Chriſt) proper Objects of it?

it? Whereas, if there were no Vice in the World, there could be no ſuch Thing as Vertue: In the Purſuit whereof, if it were not our Choice that directed us, but our Fate that led us, we might with juſt as much Reaſon expect a Reward for eating when we are hungry, drinking when we are thirſty, or performing any other Natural Action, as for being honeſt, chaſte, or temperate.

But Man had his Portion aſſign'd him on very different Terms: He was made a free Agent; he was endu'd with Rational Powers, and an Elective Faculty: He was requir'd and enabled to glorify his Maker, on certain Conditions ſtipulated between his Creator and him: He lives here in a State of Tryal and Probation, invited and call'd upon to obey, by the ſtrongeſt Obligations both of Intereſt and Duty, but tempted to diſobey by outward Objects and inward Luſts, and not incapable of yielding to the Force of ſuch Temptations. God has ſet before him Life and Death, Good and Evil; he has made him ſenſible what will be the Conſequence of either Way of Acting; and after many gracious Calls and fatherly Admonitions to make a wiſe Choice, leaves both Ways open, and him to the Liberty of that Courſe, to which his own Diſcretion, thus prepar'd, thus byaſs'd and influenc'd to the better and happier Choice, ſhall guide him.

This is the Way of God's dealing with Mankind; and what Pretence can we take from ſuch a Conduct, to arraign his Purity, or tax him as

a Lover

a Lover and Encourager of Vice. Not to hinder a thing, when we can, and to approve it, are far from being equivalent Terms: There may be many Reaſons, even in Human Conduct, why we chooſe to bear with that which we condemn: And ſo there are in the Divine. He makes a ſtrict Proof of the Sincerity of his Servants, that thoſe who are faithful may be made manifeſt, that their Integrity may ſhine out with a diſtinguiſh'd Luſtre: He tries us like Silver, and hopes to find us as pure: He gives us Opportunities of offending him, which he wiſhes we may never take. He is far from deſiring the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould turn and be ſav'd; and in order thereto, he has encouraged, commanded, beſought, nay even inclin'd us, and only does not neceſſitate us to be good; and conſequently, his barely permitting that Impiety, which he ſo manifeſtly hates, can never be conſtru'd as an Approbation of it.

Since then God may bear with Sin and ſinful Men, without being a Favourer of either, how far, or to what Degree he may bear with them, he ſure himſelf is the moſt proper Judge. The greateſt Irregularities that can prevail in the World, are no more a Reflexion on his Holineſs, than the leaſt, and the ſelf-ſame Reaſons will account for both: Some Monſters of an unuſual Size may be allow'd of in the Moral, as well as in the Natural World, and there may be Giants in Iniquity, as well as in Stature.

Nor is God any more to be charged with the Want of Juſtice, than of Purity. As for all the unequal Diſpenſation of Bleſſings and Afflictions we complain of, and the little Proportion they bear to the ſeveral Demerits of Men; this is a much better Argument that there muſt be a God, who will judge the World, than that there is none who governs it. The Divine Juſtice is indeed concern'd, that the good and evil Actions of Men may, ſooner or later, meet with a ſuitable Recompence: But whether in this Life, or the next, or in both; infinite, unerring Wiſdom can beſt direct. Why he ſhould not alway do it in this, or at leaſt, not juſt at that Time, and in that Manner we would have him, the following Reaſons may be offer'd, which I ſhall but juſt mention, and forbear to enlarge on them.

Before we preſume then to murmur on this ſcore, and complain that we are hardly dealt with, we ought ſeriouſly to conſider: That whatever Afflictions the beſt Men ſuffer, 'tis far leſs than they deſerve: That happy is their Caſe, who have their Portion of Evil allotted them in this Life: That every Thing the World reputes an Evil, is not ſo in Reality: That if God ſhould viſibly interpoſe to reſtrain every Act of Injuſtice, he muſt work continual Miracles: That the temporal Intereſts of good and bad Men are ſo twiſted and link'd together, that the one cannot ſuffer any remarkable Calamity, without involving the other in a conſiderable Share of it: That if it had been the conſtant Method

of

of Providence, to puniſh every Offence, by ſending ſome immediate temporal Judgment on the Offender; the Race of Men would have been but of ſhort Continuance, and the World had long ſince been again unpeopled: That if every Fact were to meet with its Reward, as ſoon as it was committed, it would leave no Room for Faith in Bleſſings or Puniſhments to come: Nay, ſuch a Proceeding would almoſt as neceſſarily over-rule the Will of Man, and determine it one Way, as if he had no Liberty of Election at all. All which conſider'd, I think, we may very fairly and reaſonably conclude, that it is not without wiſe and good Reaſons, that Almighty GOD does for ſome time bear with the Inſtruments of Evil, and ſuffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and ſurprizing Height of Impiety, which was my firſt Propoſition. But which will farther qualify the ſeeming Hardſhips, and effectually convince us that there is *a Reward for the Righteous, and a GOD that judgeth the Earth*; I come now in the

Second place to ſhew, That there is a determinate Degree of Wickedneſs, beyond which the Divine Providence will not ſuffer them to paſs, but manifeſtly interpoſes to prevent the fatal Extremities that would follow from an unreſtrain'd, unlimited Power, join'd with a malicious Will, and brutal Diſpoſition to Miſchief.

I do not affirm, that this Interpoſition of God to reſtrain enormous Wickedneſs does ordinarily appear by miraculous Effects, and ſupernatural Operations. Not but that he has reſerv'd to himſelf a Right of Over-ruling ſecond Cauſes, and diverting Nature from its ſettled Courſe: He has not made it ſo far his Subſtitute, as not to be able to reſume the Power into his own Hands, whenever he ſees a juſt Occaſion. When the Exigence of Affairs requires it, when mighty Miſchiefs call for no common Aid, when all the uſual Remedies fail, and all the Foundations of the Earth are out of Courſe; he then ſuperſedes the Commiſſion of Nature, rules by a ſpecial Providence, and by ſtupendous Inſtances of his Power convinces the World that a Superiour Agent is at work. He writes his Judgments in ſuch legible Characters, that all Men who ſee them ſhall ſay, *This hath God done, for they ſhall perceive that it is his Work.*

The whole Sacred Hiſtory abounds with remarkable Inſtances of his miraculous Power, both in preſerving and deſtroying. Nor have later Ages been without the Experience of ſome Events, the immediate Author of which muſt be confeſſedly more than Human. But this is very Rare, and not the uſual Way in which he chooſes to exert his Reſtraining Power, and to curb the Extravagance of Lawleſs Oppreſſion. He can compaſs his Ends as effectually by Inferiour Agents, and make us the Inſtruments of executing his Judgments on one another.

He

He is the Supreme Lord of Nature, and of every Power belonging to it: He can command the Aſſiſtance both of free and neceſſary Agents, and by an imperceptible Influence diſpoſe and put into Motion thoſe ſubordinate Cauſes, whoſe Concurrence will beſt accompliſh any Purpoſe which he is determin'd to bring to paſs.

But it may be ask'd, How ſhall we diſtinguiſh theſe Providential Appointments from the Ordinary Occurrences that befall us? By what Rule muſt we judge, *when* the Hand of God is in any Event, and *when* it is a Matter of common Courſe? Muſt we be guided in this Caſe meerly by the Succeſs? Muſt we look upon thoſe as moſt favour'd by GOD, who are moſt fortunate and thriving, and aſcribe the Advantages they enjoy to GOD's peculiar Interpoſal in their behalf? This is a Pretenſion indeed which has been often made, as well by the Enemies as Friends of GOD, and by none more than the Authors of that Confuſion with which this Nation was ſo long diſtracted, and to which the Deliverance of this Day put a happy and a glorious End. They ſucceeded in their baſe and bloody Attempts, which embolden'd them to ſtyle the moſt wicked and deteſtable of their Actions, *the Bleſſed Work*, and *the Lord's Work*, and while they ſeem'd to aſcribe to him the Praiſe, they entitled him to the Guilt of all they had been doing.

But

But to anſwer the Enquiry. 'Tis not the Success of any Event, 'tis not a Train of lucky Accidents, but the Righteouſneſs of the Cauſe and Excellency of the End which is to be ſerv'd by any great Deliverance, that can encourage us to believe it is ſent from God. He is a God of Juſtice, and of purer Eyes, than to behold Iniquity with Approbation: He is a God of Peace and Order, and not of Diſcord and Confuſion. Whatever Diſpenſations are agreeable to the former of theſe, are worthy the Divine Being; and ſuch as he delights to be call'd the Author of: But whatſoever tends to produce the contrary Effects, tho' he permits, tho' he connives at, tho' he bears with it for a Seaſon for Reaſons mention'd under the foregoing Head, is ſo far from his Doing, or from being warranted by his Authority, that in his own due time he will effectually reverſe it.

Let us not think, when his Providence winks that it is unobſerving, but perſuade ourſelves that it is a cloſe, tho' ſilent Obſerver of human Actions, and treaſures up Wrath, tho' it forbears to ſtrike; till rouz'd at laſt by daring Impiety, and provok'd by outrageous Violence the Lord awakes as one out of Sleep, and puts his Enemies to a perpetual Shame. We may reſt aſſur'd that every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon, and that God can direct the Actions of wicked, as well as of good Men to his own Glory. The Lord hath made all things for himſelf, yea even the Wicked in the Day of Evil.

Whatever

Whatever Power the Inſtruments of Ill have, their Commiſſion ſtill is limited, and they have their Bounds ſet them, which they cannot paſs. The Devil had Inclination enough, at firſt, to have afflicted *Job* in his Perſon, as well as in his Fortune and Relations, but that he was with-held by the expreſs Command of God: *Behold, all that he hath is in thy Power, only upon himſelf put not forth thy Hand.* And as willing was he, upon a farther Trial, wherein his Commiſſion was enlarged, to have remov'd out of the World ſuch a profeſs'd Enemy of the Powers of Darkneſs, if he had not been under ſuch another Prohibition. *Behold, he is in thy Hand, but ſave his Life.*

And as God manifeſtly abridges the Power of the Wicked, after they have ſerv'd his Ends; ſo he ſometimes lays inviſible Reſtraints upon the Will: As he baffles the Rage of ſome, ſo he ſoftens that of others, and takes from them the very Diſpoſition to do Evil. A remarkable Inſtance whereof we have in the Caſe of S. *Paul*, who at firſt was a Blaſphemer, and a Perſecutor, and injurious, a Confederate with the Murderers of S. *Stephen*, and one that conſented to his Death: He made Havock of the Church, and entred into every Houſe, haling Men and Women, and committing them to Priſon. And thus far the Almighty thought fit to bear with him, as well knowing that all this Wrath and Fierceneſs would turn to his Praiſe. But when he *yet* breath'd out Threatnings and Slaughter, when not contented with what

what he had done at *Jeruſalem*, he was going to *Damaſcus* with the like cruel Intention; this was the Remainder of his Wrath, and this was happily reſtrain'd by his wonderful Converſion.

As bad as the World is, if the great Sovereign of it did not ſometimes interpoſe to ſet things right, it would be much worſe: And if Men would but reflect on the Evils he prevents, as well as thoſe he bears with; they would not be ſo forward to ſpeak and think injuriouſly of his Providence. But that *we* may be poſſeſs'd with juſter Notions, and look back with a grateful Remembrance on the great Deliverance he formerly wrought for us, let us in the

Third place conſider that particular Act of Providence, in the middle of the laſt Century, which we are now met to commemorate; when, tho' the Wrath of Man had prevailed to an exceſſive Degree, ſo as to murder the Beſt of Kings, and over-turn the Beſt of Conſtitutions; yet it pleas'd God to reſtrain the Remainder of that Wrath, by reſtoring the Royal Family, and ſettling us again on our ancient Foundations.

When it ſeem'd good to the Divine Wiſdom, to reſtore the Body Politick to a perfect Soundneſs, to recover it from that low and languiſhing Condition, to which its ſevere and reiterated Convulſions had reduc'd it, to heal up thoſe Wounds which for ſo many Years had been kept bleeding, and to put an End to that long and diſmal

Train

Train of Miſeries, in which our own Wickedneſs had involv'd us. When God was pleas'd, as at the firſt Formation of the World, to bring forth Light out of Darkneſs, and Order out of Confuſion: And that too by ſuch unlikely and unpromiſing Inſtruments, by working ſo ſudden and ſurprizing a Change in the Hearts of ſome, who had been the Authors of many Miſchiefs, to whom much of the Ill that had been done might be imputed, and who, but a very little time before, ſeem'd rather to be contriving a Prolongation and Increaſe of the Nation's Calamities, if greater they could have been; as to make them the Authors, under him, of ſo glorious a Deliverance, of ſettling the Kingdom in a perfect Tranquillity, uniting the Divided Intereſts and Factions of Men, who before were in the utmoſt Diſtraction, between their many Lords and their various Forms of Government, freeing them from the worſt Conſequence of habitual Sin, the almoſt inevitable Neceſſity of ſinning on, and making it their Safety, where it was always their Duty, to render their Allegiance.

And ſuch was the Caſe, when our late Injur'd Sovereign was ſo unanimouſly brought back to his Rightful Poſſeſſions, which, thro' a Succeſſion of ſo many Years, had been detain'd from him, by the Avarice and Ambition, the Violence and Iniquity of his Father's Murderers. When the Hearts of his Subjects were turn'd to him, as one Man, notwithſtanding they had been ſo long alienated, and tho' they had been accuſtom'd, after

the Example of their ſeditious Rulers, and more ſeditious Teachers, to think and ſpeak of him, not only without Reverence and Common Decency, but in the vileſt Terms of Abhorrence and Reproach.

When the good Old Eſtabliſhment, both in Church and State, was ſo peaceably introduc'd, after ſo long a Diſuſe and Interruption; and the People, who had run through ſo many Changes both of Religion and Government, were ſo generally diſpos'd to ſay of the Old one, that there was none like it: They remember'd then, with a ſenſible Regret for their paſt Follies, how dearly they had paid for their giddy Curioſity, and wanton Deſire to alter a ſafe and happy Conſtitution: How they had ſhaken off the imaginary Yoke both of Monarchy and Prelacy, and never till then were real Slaves: How they had ſeiz'd on the Poſſeſſions of both; and when they had done ſo, like other Robbers, quarrel'd among themſelves about dividing the Booty: How they had been deluded by falſe Repreſentations of their Chriſtian Liberty, and taught to undervalue Ordinances, the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper not excepted, the Uſe of which had been intermitted to a ſcandalous Degree; with what a miſguided Zeal they had lent a Hand to the Pulling down the Strong Holds of what they call'd Eccleſiaſtical Tyranny, and deſtroy'd all Diſcipline and Juriſdiction in the Church; and when that was done, how miſerably

ſerably they were ſometimes confounded by the Want of any Diſcipline at all: How heavily at other times they groan'd under the Severity of a much more rigorous and impoſing Church-Government, than that which they had diſcarded: How they, who had join'd in a Cry of Perſecution againſt the Biſhops, when they came afterward to be divided among themſelves, as they ſeverally happen'd to have their Turns of prevailing, perſecuted one another with greater Heat, and treated each other with leſs Indulgence, than they had even complain'd of in the Times of their Regular Governors.

They ſaw how fatally they had been miſled by the noiſy Clamour, and plauſible Pretences of ſome turbulent and unruly Men, who complain'd loudly of thoſe Grievances they meant to make heavier, and expreſs'd a tender Concern for their Liberties, when all they aim'd at, was more effectually to enſlave them.

And ſurely there is no Bondage ſo irkſom, no Chains that feel ſo weighty, or gall ſo ſorely, as thoſe which are impos'd by one's Equals or Inferiours; which was the Caſe in thoſe rebellious Times, when the Vileſt of the People had thruſt themſelves into the higheſt Stations, and, with a full Swing of Violence and Oppreſſion, lorded it over their Superiors. The Liberties and Properties of their Fellow-Subjects were arbitrarily invaded, without any

Method of Redreſs; Nay, the ſure Conſequence of ſeeking a Redreſs of their Grievances was, to be more heavily aggriev'd for ſeeking it: Juſtice was then decided by the Military Sword, and all Civil Power was at an End, or nothing at leaſt remain'd, but the Mock-Appearance of it.

Theſe, with many more inſupportable Calamities, were the Reſult of thoſe cauſleſs Jealouſies and Diſcontents, which embroil'd the Reign of the moſt gracious and indulgent Prince that ever fill'd a Throne, the moſt tender of his People's Rights and Liberties, the fartheſt from purſuing thoſe arbitrary and deſtructive Meaſures, in which his unhappy Son, by the Advice of treacherous Counſellors, was ſo deeply engaged, as to make a ſubſequent Change of the Government neceſſary and unavoidable. But no ſuch threatning Projects to Religion and Liberty were form'd under the Father's Government; His People were, or might have been the happieſt Subjects upon Earth, could they have underſtood or valu'd their own Happineſs. But a Spirit of Faction and Diſcord was gone forth; they were quarrelſome and uneaſy, they knew not why; ſomething they ſtill wanted, they knew not what; they were angry and diſſatisfied, and reſolv'd to be ſo, in Spite of the moſt condeſcending Methods that could be taken for their Satisfaction. Artful and deſigning Men knew how to work upon their Diſcontents, and fill them with groundleſs Fears,

till

till they had rais'd ſuch a Ferment as broke out into Treaſon and actual Rebellion, and from thence proceeded to the Murder of the Sovereign, and Extirpation of the Royal Family: Thus far did God ſuffer their Wrath to prevail to their own Hurt, and make their Crime their Puniſhment. But when they had ſmarted ſufficiently for their perverſe Folly, and ſenſibly experienc'd the Difference between an eaſy Government, and a State of Anarchy; he reſtor'd the former to them by ſo ſtrange and ſurprizing a Turn of Providence, as few Hiſtories can parallel. An Event wiſh'd for by many, hoped for by few, but expected by none. A Deſign carefully conceal'd from any one's Knowledge by the Principal Actor, and perhaps not fully reſolv'd on by himſelf many Days before the Accompliſhment of it; but when accompliſh'd, receiv'd with univerſal Joy, and ſubmitted to with ſo ready and chearful an Acquieſcence, with ſo little of Struggle and Oppoſition, as if the whole Body of the People had been in the Secret of the Reſtoration, and been diſpos'd by ſome previous Notice to expect the Bleſſing of ſuch a Change.

But the Diſpoſition was from Above; it was the ſecret Influence of a Divine Monitor, that wrought ſo ſudden a Converſion in them, that ſhew'd them the Errors of their former ill Conduct, and taught them to embrace their own Happineſs and Security. How wiſe is God in his Counſels, how wonderful in his Works!

How

How ſhort is human Foreſight, how precarious the Schemes of the ableſt Politicians! By what unexpected Means, in how unlook'd for a Manner are the greater Diſpenſations of Providence brought to paſs! Vain is the Strength of the Mighty, uſeleſs is the Craft of the Subtle, in croſſing any Ends, which he is reſolv'd to accompliſh, or in promoting thoſe which he is determin'd to bring to nought. Without his Aſſiſtance, neither can the Strong Man gain the Battle, nor the Swift one win the Race, nor Men of the Deepeſt Reach of Underſtanding ſucceed in their Deſigns. They may value themſelves highly on their ſuppoſed Abilities, and that Superiority of Genius, by which they are diſtinguiſh'd from other Men; they may entertain themſelves with their large and comprehenſive Views, and the Vaſtneſs of their Schemes: But when they have deliberated with the utmoſt Sagacity, 'tis God at laſt that will determine the Iſſue. He has numberleſs Ways of defeating their beſt laid Stratagems, and turning their pretended Wiſdom into Fooliſhneſs. They are infinitely more inconſiderable in his Hands, than the meaneſt Inſtrument they work with is in theirs. He can caſt them down from the moſt promiſing Height of Expectation, when they are big with vain Hopes, and think themſelves out of the reach of Diſappointment.

The trueſt Wiſdom then is that which comes from above: The ſureſt Policy is to recommend ourſelves to the Divine Protection, to engage it

no Deſigns wherein we may not reaſonably promiſe ourſelves his Favour and Encouragement. And they will ever be the beſt Patriots and the beſt Subjects, will contribute moſt effectually to the Welfare and Preſervation of their King and Country, who proſecute all their Aims by the moſt honourable, righteous, and Chriſtian Methods, and direct them to the Glory of that God, without whoſe Bleſſing on our Endeavours, whatever we take in Hand muſt unavoidably miſcarry.

To whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, both now and evermore. Amen.

FINIS.

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